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A THIRD SMOOTH SPECIES OF *POLYLEPISCUS* (POLYDESMIDA: EURYURIDAE)[1]

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Two of the seven species of millipeds referred to the genus *Polylepiscus* in my recent key (1962) are unusual in that the metatergites are entirely smooth and polished, thus lacking the characteristic, elevated, polygonal areas of the more typical forms. At an earlier time, dorsal sculpture was often made the basis for generic distinctions in the Euryuridae, but we now know that this character is a mutable one of only specific importance. Among the known species of *Polylepiscus*—as defined by a concordance of gonopod structure and essentially all details of body form—tergal texture ranges from completely smooth, through flattened polygonal areation, to the extreme condition in which the polygons are tuberculate or even obscured by heavy granulation.

I have just become aware of still another dorsally smooth polylepiscid which was described ten years ago and which I have overlooked in preparing two previous accounts of this genus (1954, 1962). This is the Guatemalan species named *Aphelidesmus major* by Dr. R. V. Chamberlin in 1952.

Comparison of the description and drawings published for *A. major*—based upon a female—with specimens of *Aphelidesmus* and *Polylepiscus*, shows this name to be unquestionably based upon a milliped congeneric with *Polylepiscus stolli* Pocock. I therefore take this occasion to formally transfer the species to *Polylepiscus*, and to distinguish it from its nearest relatives. It may be noted in passing that *major* was allocated to *Aphelidesmus* prior to the discovery of *P. trimaculatus* and

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P. campanulae, thus at a time when all of the known polylepiscids showed the dorsal sculpture thought to characterize the genus.

Polylepiscus major (Chamberlin), new combination

Aphelidesmus major Chamberlin, 1952, Ann. Ent. Soc. Am., 45: 581, Figs. 28, 29. Holotype female, Chicago Nat. Hist. Mus., from Escobas, Guatemala.

Diagnosis: A medium-sized member of the genus characterized by the smooth metatergites, caudal production of the peritremata of segments 5–19, occurrence of strigiles on paranota of segments 4–19, and the presence of a broad, longitudinal, mid-dorsal light stripe.

Remarks: *Polylepiscus major* runs out to couplet 3 in my 1962 key, along with *P. trimaculatus* and *P. campanulae*. It shares some of the characters of these forms, and has at least one unique to itself, as indicated by the table:

	trimaculatus:	*major*:	*campanulae*:
Body width	10–12 mm	10 mm	5–7 mm
Dorsal pattern	A median row of large, suboval spots	A broad, light mid-dorsal band	Mid-dorsal area uniformly dark brown
Distribution of strigiles	Segments 6–18	Segments 4–19	Segments 4–19
Spiniform peritremata	5–19	5–19	5–19

I venture the opinion that *major* will eventually be found to be most closely related to *P. trimaculatus*, although it is by no means asserted that tergal sculpture alone indicates a common ancestry in this, or any other milliped genus. Affinity must be determined by the comparison of the entire animals, as we are classifying *organisms*, not tergites, or color patterns, or gonopods.

Although the correct generic placement of female specimens is still a somewhat uncertain undertaking, it is puzzling that the species *major* would have been assigned to *Aphelidesmus*. A number of considerations at once arouse suspicion: the discovery of a large species (10 mm in width) in a genus composed otherwise of numerous species less than 5 mm in width; the occurrence of conspicuous strigiles in a genus where, to the best of my knowledge, they have not been previously recorded; and the occurrence of this unusual species considerably to the north of the known range of its supposed congeners. The generic transfer here proposed disposes of all these anomalies, but does result in the malapropism of a moderate-sized species bearing the name *major* among congeners which are appreciably larger!

Literature Cited

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